



Gaithersburg
A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

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MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION APRIL 4, 2006

Chair John Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice-Chair Lenny Levy, Commissioners Matthew Hopkins, Lloyd Kaufman, and Alternate Geri Lanier, Planning and Code Administration Director Greg Ossont, Planner Jacqueline Marsh, Planning Intern Allen Meyer, and Recording Secretary Myriam Gonzalez. Chair Bauer noted Alternate Commissioner Lanier would be participating this evening, since not all Commissioners were present. Absent: Commissioner Danny Winborne.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 21, 2007, Planning Commission Meeting

Vice-Chair Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman, to DEFER voting on the Minutes of the March 21, 2007, Planning Commission Meeting.

Vote: 5-0

II. CONSENT

AFP-07-008 -- 408 Bell Grove Road at Whetstone Run R-90 Zone
(Benitez Residence)
Room Above Existing Garage
AMENDMENT TO FINAL PLAN REVIEW

Vice-Chair Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman, to APPROVE the Consent Agenda.

Vote: 5-0

III. SITE PLANS

AFP-07-009 -- Holiday Inn C-2 Zone
2 Montgomery Village Avenue
Exterior Renovations
AMENDMENT TO FINAL PLAN REVIEW

Planner Marsh located the site and introduced the applicant.

Applicant representative Mark Carrier, BF Saul Property Company, presented the plan, photographs of the site and existing building, as well as the proposed elevation changes, noting they include the replacement of the porte cochere on the west elevation with a more

modern porte cochere element, the replacement of windows, the addition of decorative treatments, and the replacement of a significant amount of brick with another skin building system (EIFS) for a modernized image. He indicated the work would commence this summer and would take about eight months before completion. He noted the hotel would remain open throughout the project.

Mr. Carrier answered questions of Commissioner Kaufman and Chair Bauer regarding scaffolding and safety precautions, impact on parking, the height increase of the new porte cochere and improved vehicle flow under it, and signage. Regarding the latter, Mr. Carrier noted that the signage would be replaced with new corporate signage, and that the sign package would be submitted for approval at a later date.

There was no public testimony.

Ms. Marsh voiced staff's recommendation for approval, as the plan meets the site plan approval criteria of the Zoning Ordinance, subject to the applicant's compliance with a condition that she listed. She commented that the future sign package would include the replacement of an existing building sign that does not face a public street or entrance, which requires Commission approval.

Chair Bauer complimented the applicant on the proposed project.

Vice-Chair Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Hopkins, to grant AFP-07-009 – Holiday Inn, AMENDMENT TO FINAL PLAN APPROVAL, finding it in compliance with Zoning Ordinance §§ 24-170 and 24-172, with the following condition:

1. Applicant shall submit a sign package for review and approval by the Planning Commission.

Vote: 5-0

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| AFP-07-010 -- | 21 Firstfield Professional Center | E-1 Zone |
| | 21 Firstfield Road | |
| | Parking Revisions | |
| | AMENDMENT TO FINAL PLAN REVIEW | |

Since the applicant was absent at this time, this review was postponed until later in the meeting.

IV. FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Hopkins

Referenced a new training CD from the American Planning Association on form-based codes, suggesting it could be a useful resource.

SITE PLANS (Continued)

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| AFP-07-010 -- | 21 Firstfield Professional Center | E-1 Zone |
| | 21 Firstfield Road | |
| | Parking Revisions | |
| | AMENDMENT TO FINAL PLAN REVIEW | |

Planning Intern Meyer located the site on an aerial photograph. He noted that in the Staff Comments previously furnished to the Commission, the parking requirement was listed in error, adding that the correct requirement is 181 parking spaces.

Architect/Applicant Scott Norberg, Interplan Inc., 5185 MacArthur Boulevard, Washington, D.C., representing Property Owner Brownstone Capital, LLC., noted the existing building would be renovated and converted from leased office to condominium offices. He presented photographs of the site and the proposed plan to bring the accessibility ramps into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and to re-stripe the parking lot after putting an asphalt overlay. He discussed the existing green space (31 percent), landscaping enhancements, and large mature trees.

Mr. Norberg indicated the application includes waiver requests of the required drive aisle width and parking lot green space. He discussed the bases for the two types of waivers requested, noting the green space exceeds the requirement for the entire site, the configuration of the parking lot and the landscaping surrounding it, and the width of the existing parking modules which predate the current Parking Ordinance. In response to Vice-Chair Levy, Mr. Norberg explained that removing some of the surplus parking to comply with the required parking green space would require the reconfiguration of the parking lot, stripping existing curbs, gutters, etc., for little additional internal green space. He added that the surplus parking provided is an attractive feature for tenants.

There was no testimony from the public.

Planning Intern Meyer voiced staff's recommendation for approval, as the plan meets the site plan approval criteria, subject to the applicant's compliance with conditions that he listed.

Chair Bauer noted the unusual configuration of this site, including a large amount of green space and landscaping surrounding the entire parking area as well as the building. He also noted the advantage of the absence of double parking rows, which minimizes the visual impact. Commissioner Hopkins raised an environmental concern over removing the asphalt of the entire lot for a few planting beds in order to bring a pre-existing condition into compliance with the subject requirements. Chair Bauer listed the benefits of the plan with improved accessibility, a well-buffered building, and the small amount of the waiver requests, noting that requiring compliance would necessitate extensive design and engineering, demolition and construction. Commissioner Kaufman noted he would support granting the waiver requests. Vice-Chair Levy stated that his concerns had been lessened by the applicant's presentation.

Vice-Chair Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Hopkins, to grant AFP-07-010 – 21 Firstfield Professional Center, AMENDMENT TO FINAL PLAN APPROVAL, finding it in compliance with Zoning Ordinance §§ 24-170, 24-172, and 24-222A, with the following conditions:

1. Planning Commission grant a waiver of seven percent of the required ten percent parking lot green space and an aisle width waiver of three inches for the northern drive aisle, two inches for the eastern drive aisle, and three feet, ten inches for the southern drive aisle; and
2. Applicant is to submit a revised plan showing the correct number of parking spaces and the waiver amount.

Vote: 5-0

Vice-Chair Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman, to grant the following waivers to AFP-07-010:

1. A waiver of seven percent of the required ten percent parking lot green space; and
2. An aisle width waiver of three inches for the northern drive aisle, a waiver of two inches for the eastern drive aisle, and a waiver of 3 feet-ten inches for the southern drive aisle.

Vote: 5-0

Vice-Chair Levy suggested that a definition of "parking lot" be included in the Definitions section of the Zoning Ordinance. Chair Bauer also suggested considering a Zoning Ordinance amendment that would classify over-parking at some percentage as a waiver condition.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before this session, the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Gonzalez
Recording Secretary